Here, After The Fall

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Here, After The Fall

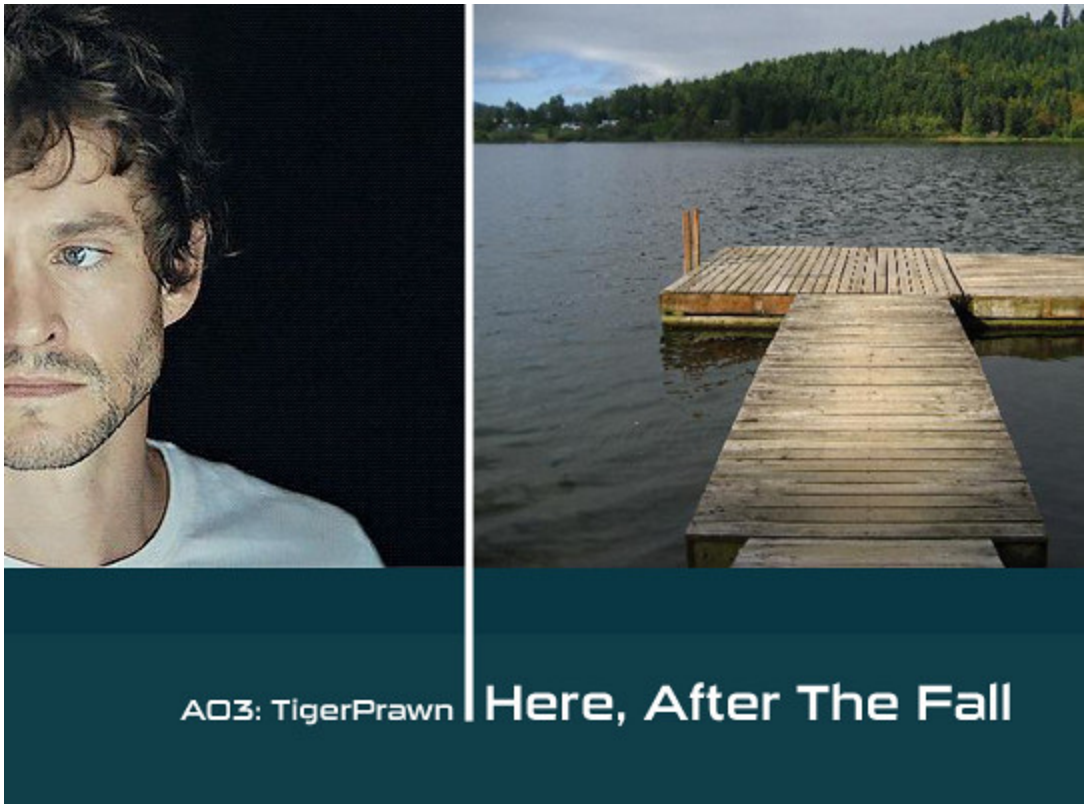
by TigerPrawn

Summary

When Will wakes after the fall he realises it’s inevitable that Hannibal knows everything.

Notes

My First Place entry for @fannibalfest-toronto Stag Awards (S4 AU). Massive thanks to everyone who voted, it means the world to me <3



Will woke with a start, trembling and huffing heavy breaths as he escaped the submerging waters of his dream. All too real, too visceral.

Under his fingers he could feel cool bed sheets, though it took his brain a moment to adjust his expectations. Having expected to find silt between his fingers.

He had dreamt so often of water consuming him, more and more as the encephalitis had taken hold. A childhood fear he thought he had conquered. Falling from his dad's boat when he was nine years old had been overcome by spending his formative years on the water. In his waking hours at least. From then on it had been a feature in many of his nightmares - taking him back to that terrifying moment when he thought he would die.

When he had plunged from the bluff, his mind had turned to how like his nightmares his death would be as he hit the water - clinging to Hannibal. And he wasn't scared. All that he had registered as the water threatened to fill his lungs, was the press of Hannibal against him.

I don't know if I can save myself. And maybe that's just fine.

But he hadn't died and the experience had added weight to his nightmares. A more recent experience to recall in horrific detail as the water attempted to swallow him whole as it had in his nightmares for decades. In weeks of not quite waking, even knowing it was a dream, he was paralysed in the waters of his mind.

Will shuddered, taking short sharp breaths until he was able to begin regulating them. He tried to even his breathing, tried to stop the shaking. It took a minute or more but slowly he came back to himself.

The room was vaguely familiar. He had woken several times, he knew, but had not been aware enough to take in much more than the fact he was in what appeared to be someone's basic guest room. It was a fair size but had little within. The walls were that off-white that seemed to be a generic default. The bed was a queen, and he had been propped against pillows, another under his left leg which he could feel distantly throbbing. The covers had a flower pattern and could only be described as something a grandmother might pick out. When he had come to before, these things had filtered into his brain but he hadn't been able to remain awake long enough to process further.

He was awake now.

As Will tried to sit he felt the tug on his arm and looked to the other side of the bed to see an IV set up and attached to his right hand, a bandage keeping the canular secure.

He took in a deep breath and let it out with a shaky acceptance, settling back on the pillows. Wherever he was, whoever he was with, it was not a hospital - not some sort of custody. He was sure even being unconscious and with Jack attesting for him in some way, that what he had done would have landed him in custody of the FBI.

It takes two to catch one.

He wasn't sure how he felt about that. Perhaps if he had woken handcuffed to a hospital bed it would have been a relief.

Hannibal

If he had then Hannibal had been caught, or was dead. Maybe the same was true now. Will felt numb to the possibility, no idea how to process it. His mind consumed by swirling thoughts, memories, of Hannibal clinging to him until he blacked out, Will drifted off once more.

*

"You're awake, welcome back."

The voice a familiar comfort and Will found himself wondering how he could have ever considered that Hannibal had perished. So unfathomably godlike was the man, Will wasn't sure if anything would kill him. He wasn't sure whether that should be comforting or terrifying, but he remained numb all the same.

Will opened his eyes and found Hannibal sat next to him in an old wooden chair that, had it been in the room before, Will had not noticed.

He was suddenly hyper aware that Hannibal's hand not only rested on the bed mere millimeters from his own, but that his fingers twitched as though aching to close the space between them. Will wasn't sure what was stopping Hannibal now when he had many a time stepped into Will's personal space. He hesitated to call it an invasion.

And then the realisation hit him.

“You have been treating me.” Will stated, not a question, his disused voice breaking over the words and ending in a cough that prompted Hannibal to produce a glass of water with a straw that he held to Will’s lips. Will coughed again and then drank the cool and soothing water, watching Hannibal intently as he did so. Wondering if his words held the accusation that he had felt.

Hannibal took a deep breath and let it out slowly.

“Myself and Chiyoh, yes.” He cleared his throat and looked away before continuing, placing the water back on the bedside table he must have taken it from, Will watched it ripple and settle. “She already had a boat waiting for us, as I had planned with her. Little did I realise how things would unfold, but she had observed all from the water and then fished us from the sea once she had located us.” Hannibal still didn't look at him. “Your health… you don’t eat well. A little underweight and low in vitamins, you contracted hypothermia. It has taken you sometime to recover and you still have some recovery ahead of you. But you are awake, you are through the worst of it.”

Will clenched his jaw, not acknowledging Hannibal’s words. “She knows too, I assume.” His words were gravel and he felt a deep sense of intrusion at the idea of Chiyoh knowing this about him. But, strangely not Hannibal - not in the same way at least.

Hannibal finally looked at him. “No, she doesn’t. She has only ever assisted and has not seen you in a state of undress.”

“But you took my clothes off, put me in dry ones. Tucked me into bed.” There was no accusation this time, just a cold summary.

“I had no choice but to do so.” Hannibal’s words were matter of fact, not defensive and Will nodded his acknowledgement.

“So, now you know.” He swallowed, feeling that weird sense of dread settle in his chest. A fear of rejection he had only felt a handful of times before.

“Yes.” Was Hannibal’s gentle reply.

*

Will slowly moved his legs back and forth in the water. The wood of the jetty was warm to the touch and the air was heavy with heat, much like his youth in Louisiana. The water was cool, cooler still the deeper you got, but Will was satisfied to hang his legs over the side. It was good to exercise the leg he'd injured in the fall, but this was enough.

Too soon to face water again.

Too soon to face a lot of things.

Without looking he knew that Hannibal busied himself in the cabin they currently called home. Likely he stole the odd glance out the window at Will. Hannibal often wasn't as subtle as he thought he was. Nothing about him was of course.

That first day awake, when Will had napped again, he woke to see a pile of clothes on the chair next to his bed. The pants he'd been wearing, worn but wearable - he suspected the rest of the clothes were destroyed. A couple of new t-shirts, and some new boxers topped the pile. A small lump under the underwear had made Will's heart slam so hard it took his breath. He knew without looking that it was his packer. Quietly returned to him.

It had been a couple of weeks since he woke up and they had barely spoken at all. When they had it had been perfunctory - *would you like some water?; I've made dinner; Don't forget sunscreen.*

Will's responses were little more than grunts. Not with the intent of being rude, but for lack of words he could say.

Which was not the whole truth. There were a lot of things he could say, but the words were still unformed and scattered. Tumultuous within him as though still roiling in the Atlantic.

This eventuality had not occurred to him, not that his course could have been altered. He had expected death. He hadn't expected Hannibal. Which was a ridiculous underestimation that he should have known better than to allow.

And now Hannibal knew.

He had at times considered telling him. First as his therapist, then as his friend. At some point, in the back of his mind, he had considered it - *them* - as more. Some intangible *more* that he wasn't able to quite unpack enough to commit to, or to give in to.

Yes, we were nakama.

But they seemed to have skipped ahead of that now. Here in this idyllic setting - the quaint little cabin with the ever permeating scent of home cooking. The cool waters he longed to swim in but couldn't yet bring himself to. The words he wanted to say but couldn't quite manage.

He let out a heavy sigh and slowly eased himself back so that he lay on the deck, his feet still in the water, arms behind his head as a pillow. The sun blanketed him and the air was scented with blossom. If not for the ache in his bones and the tear in his leg where rocks had tried to take hold and drag him under, it would be completely relaxing. The sort of peace he usually only found by wading into the centre of the stream.

He was not sure how many minutes had passed, his eyelids heavy and sleep crawling over him, before he was roused by the soft tread of feet on the planks beside him.

Will didn't need to open his eyes to know that Hannibal was there, hearing the delicate slosh of the water as he too sat and settled his feet over the jetty. Will didn't need to open his eyes to know - to *see* - that Hannibal had stretched out next to him in a mirror of his pose.

He sighed again, making the mental note that it had taken Hannibal all of sixteen days to give in to the obvious temptation to speak with Will. Pleasantries were clearly no longer enough and he must force Will to speak.

But the words never came.

Instead Hannibal lay next to him, his legs moving now and then to cause a current around Will's. At some point Will drifted off and was stirred by a lightly hummed aria from an opera he was sure he vaguely recognised. Later still, as the sun began to get low in the sky, he could hear Hannibal's soft snores. The strange and peaceful intimacy was soothing, more so than Will might have imagined - had he ever imagined such a thing between Hannibal and himself. Which perhaps he had.

As the sun sank lower, Will rolled to his side and observed Hannibal for a few minutes. It felt like being close to a wild animal whilst it slumbered - a lion sleeping. He would never be tame and Will wasn't sure he'd ask that. Not tame, but for Will he would allow himself to be petted, that much seemed clear. As clear as a very simple truth - to Hannibal *he* was the wild animal, and he was trying to earn Will's trust as one might from a beast.

It was working.

*

Words still didn't come. Still lost to the sea, though whether it was the Atlantic or the dark waves inside Will, he wasn't sure. He wasn't sure he needed them either - silence seemed to work well for them so far, even if it did leave those words almost uncomfortably raging under the surface.

But even so they became companionable. Chiyoh came and went now and then, but was mostly apart from them now they were both fully recovered - her duties discharged.

And so for the most part they were alone with each other, hardly any words between them. A companionable silence as they went about each day, orbiting each other and needing no words at all. A marked and strange change from their rich and calculated conversations of old, and yet it worked for them.

Months passed and the sun began to fade, the warmth of summer giving way to a stormy autumn. But between them all was calm. Wild animals with claws sheathed, learning to live around each other, they found a kind of peace. Or so it felt to Will.

When Hannibal disappeared he thought at first it was some sort of game or manipulation, possibly even a joke - to see if Will would revert to beans from a can as he was sure Hannibal assumed of him. To wind him up and let him go as he had in the past - wanting a reaction. But the days went on, and after three Will was unsure whether he would see the man again.

On the fifth day - long drawn out days of aching loneliness that Will had never felt before in his life, as though a part of his soul had been exorcised - Hannibal returned.

*

Hannibal was exhausted.

He appeared unharmed but he had been hungry and thirsty - trying his best to restrain himself from overindulgence as he likely took his own medical advice. After eating the meagre meal that Will prepared him, Hannibal very nearly fell asleep at the heavy wooden table that dominated the cabin's kitchen-diner.

Will had helped him to the shower, removed his shoes and his clothes down to his underwear and undershirt, before leaving him to his ablutions. Each move had been hesitant and still there were few words between them. Despite the desperate need within Will to say so much.

It was that desperation that held Will in Hannibal's bedroom. At first he had made to leave, but the memory of Hannibal at his bedside made him stay. How long had Hannibal sat there as he struggled to fully regain consciousness? He'd never asked. If their positions had been reversed would he have been there for Hannibal? Would he be there now?

When the water shut off Will stood awkwardly in the room, waiting. Hannibal showed a flicker of surprise to see him there when he came from the bathroom, but it passed quickly and he said nothing as he continued to dry his hair. Will wasn't sure whether to avert his eyes as the doctor, clad only in his underwear, pulled back his bed covers.

The doctor said nothing, letting out only a deep sigh, as he settled into the bed, a final look at Will standing between the soft bed and the door. Still an unpredictable and wild animal to Hannibal.

Hannibal drifted off quickly and Will pulled a chair next to the bed to watch over him, stirring every time that Hannibal did.

"Shh, Hannibal, you're fine. Rest. Sleep." Will soothed more than once, as Hannibal tossed and turned.

Hannibal may not have been physically injured but something clearly weighed on him. That much was clear when he sat suddenly upright in the middle of the night, trembling - all his usual outer calm ripped from him. With a look at Will he let out a shuddering breath and allowed himself to be lowered back to the bed.

"I dreamt I would never see you again." Hannibal's words were little more than a rumble.

Will huffed a chuckle, a smile pulling at his lips despite himself, "I thought the same. I thought you'd left. Finally fed up of doing the lion's share of the cooking around here."

He let his hand fall lightly to Hannibal's forehead, smoothing back his hair and feeling for a fevered brow. He was warm and clammy but not feverish, his eyes were piercing, but Will realised it was a reaction to his touch.

Will felt the words swimming under his skin, crashing like waves against the points where he connected with Hannibal.

All this time together since the fall and Will realised they had never touched, not since he'd awakened at least, and not until this evening as he had helped Hannibal. The memory of Hannibal's hand next to his, fingers twitching with longing to reach for him, pushed into his

mind. Had Hannibal not discovered the truth about him, would he have gone ahead and taken his hand?

They had become so close with no words, no touches, barely even a glance. Just a book placed here then read by the other, sailing on the lake together despite neither ever verbally making the plan. Moving around each other in tandem. In synchronicity.

Will drew back his hand, surprised by the quickness with which Hannibal halted it, grasping it in his own and drawing it to his mouth. He closed his eyes as he kissed Will's palm, a gentle press before positioning the hand to cup against his cheek.

"I think I was recognised. I couldn't risk leading them back here so I travelled further to the coast, taking the long way back once I was sure I was not followed." The words were spoken as an apology. "I would never leave you, Will."

Will found his mouth quirking into a smile again at the admission. They had probably shared more words in this evening than they had the whole previous week together, possibly a month.

"I'm glad." He replied, reassured. He considered then taking back his hand and letting Hannibal rest - leaving the room and returning to his own. But his body didn't seem to be interested in that. Instead he stayed as Hannibal pressed another kiss to his palm, eyes now locked with his own.

"Stay." Hannibal said. Not a question or a plea, just a word that Will could take or leave. A word that spoke of the same loneliness Will had felt, the need for comfort and reassurance that was also settling in Will's chest. Next to the dread that permanently nestled there since that first conversation after he woke.

"I…" words continued to fail him. The ones he had been searching for, for months. They flowed further from him, caught in a riptide.

Bedelia told me. And, yes, I ache for you too - even after everything we did to each other. And if what we have shared here is all we can have then I will accept it. If that is all you can give me now that you know the truth then I will take it. You are the only one that sees me, you saw everything but this and now you know, and you came back.

No words came. The tight grip of fear in his chest strangled them before they formed, gasping for them as he might for air. This was enough, this would always be enough if the alternative might be rejection.

"Will…" Hannibal breathed his name with reverence, tugging gently on his hand so that he moved closer, leaning out of the chair. "A long time ago, or it seems that way now, I let you see me. I gave you that gift and thought you rejected it. I didn't... I didn't see you as well as I thought. But now I do. I see you completely."

Will's chest was tight with emotion - fear, elation. He thought his lungs might burst. He felt like he was drowning.

Another light tug on his hand as Hannibal sat forward and their lips met. Hannibal's free hand snaked behind Will's neck and up into his mess of curls that had grown wild and abundant. Will allowed himself to be kissed, allowed Hannibal in but was too uncertain to respond. Too wary that his lungs would finally fill with water and he would be dragged under once and for all.

Perhaps sensing his hesitation, Hannibal drew back to mutter just above Will's lips, "I love you Will. I have done for sometime. It feels like I have always loved you and never known life before I met you. Nothing has changed that. Nothing ever could. I love you, nothing has changed that."

It felt as though he repeated the words to ensure they sunk in.

"Nothing." Hannibal reiterated, breathing the word against Will's lips.

Nothing.

Nothing could change his feelings for Will, his desire and want for him. His need. That ache. Their profound connection. All the things that Will had felt before the fall and after. All these things that might have been changed by the revelation. By Hannibal finally, truly, seeing Will.

"I love you too." Will breathed the words for want of anything else to say. Unable to find all those words that hadn't come together. All the explanations, filling in the backstory Hannibal didn't know, his journey to the man he was today. All the clarifications of what this meant, of *what*, *who* Will was. The words that in the past he had known by rote, had recited them like a familiar soliloquy when the circumstances arose - as infrequently as that had been. In fact, more often than not he had recited them in his mind in anticipation of being intimate with someone and then running, setting himself adrift instead.

But today it had come together. With Hannibal. And strangely, beautifully, there seemed to be no need for any words at all.

Hannibal was kissing him again, tentative and exploratory and finally Will kissed him back - hungry. Feeling the desperation of these long months together and all the years before that.

Hannibal responded with a growl, bringing his arms fully around Will and dragging him bodily onto the bed, rolling until Will was under him.

"Just tell me what you like Will, how you want..." Hannibal's words were gravel and they trailed off as he nipped kisses at Will's lips.

Will could barely catch his breath, trembling under Hannibal. He had done this so infrequently and never with anyone that had meant this much to him. Not even Molly, as terrible as the thought made him feel.

She had been so accepting - as desperate for a connection as he had been then. She had taken it in her stride, laughing that widowed single mothers of a certain age only had so many options and he was by no means, a bad option. It wasn't like she hadn't fooled around in

college with girls, so his genitalia though not female didn't phase her in the least. She enjoyed the several cocks he had and even more so the intimacy. He wasn't sure he agreed entirely but maybe there was something to her thoughts that being with someone socialised as female for part of their life was different than being with a cis man. She was done with the macho bullshit of her dead husband, a professional sportsman, and seemed to find Will a welcome relief from that toxicity.

Maybe that was why he had made it work. It wasn't terrible, she wasn't terrible. It had been a delightful sham, as good as it was going to get.

She wasn't Hannibal.

At the thought Will sobbed out a whimper, breathing heavily as he pushed Hannibal back to look him in the eyes.

"Just… just don't use anatomical names… uh… Just..." Will struggled to get out the words as Hannibal nodded and moved - started to nuzzle against his throat - against the thick stubble and the adam's apple hormone therapy had given him. "Nothing feminising." Will managed to finally clarify with a gasp as Hannibal nipped at him. He hated the words even as he said them, trying to ignore how it made him feel to explain in this way. To have to explain and not just be able to proceed wordlessly. There was a crash of waves inside him, a raging ocean of emotion that the situation threatened to turn into a maelstrom.

"Nothing about you is feminine, Will." Hannibal murmured against his flesh before pulling back to study him again, drinking him in.

Will let out a shuddering breath under Hannibal's gaze. But the exhale - the heavy sigh - wasn't for that. It was for the gentle acceptance Hannibal had given him with so few words. It was a release of the turmoil of emotions that threatened to flood from him.

The waters calmed, the ocean began to run into a stream, growing ever more gentle. He could no longer hear the deafening crash of waves in his ears. Fear and uncertainty drained from him, leaving just the man he was.

When Hannibal looked down from where he held himself, he cocked his head slightly - a small smile playing over his lips. Will realised it was a reaction to his own smile, to the half twitch of his lips as he admired Hannibal. His words, his love, his body.

"Something amuses you?" Hannibal's smile didn't falter.

Will shook his head. "Not at all."

There was something in the way Hannibal's lips formed into a half grin that released a low chuckle from Will's chest. He looked over Hannibal greying chest hair, the athletic physique that was kept well for his age. But moreover, the total confidence he had in himself - it was infectious.

Hannibal clearly was not self conscious about his body - not that he need be - and Will felt the warmth of that in his own chest.

“You’re beautiful.” Will murmured, moving his hands to Hannibal’s chest and splaying his fingers in the coarse hair.

Hannibal let out a laugh, his grin sharp. Maybe not a lion, maybe a shark swimming in Will’s stream.

Will’s hands snaked up around Hannibal’s neck and pulled him down into a passionate kiss. Hannibal shifted between his legs, his hard length pressing against Will’s thigh in a way that made him both hard and wet.

The moan he released into Hannibal’s mouth was beyond his control.

Hannibal broke the kiss, going back on his knees and beginning to pull up Will’s sweater and t-shirt in one go. Will was panting hard as he moved to allow the divesting, wriggling and propping himself up so Hannibal could pull his top off over his head. Hannibal instantly fell upon him again, propped on his elbows with his hands cupping Will’s face as he kissed him. The kiss was hungry but gentle and Will was unable to stop shaking despite Hannibal holding him in place - drinking his fill.

He couldn’t hold back the whimper as Hannibal moved his mouth from Will’s to nuzzle his jaw, down his throat and to Will’s chest. Another whimper broke - as much trepidation as excitement - when Hannibal teased his tongue over Will’s right nipple.

“Oh god, Hannibal.” Will’s hands shot into Hannibal’s hair, gripping it at the roots as he arched up towards Hannibal’s mouth. Hannibal hummed in response as he sucked Will’s nipple into his mouth. “S-sensitive.” Will managed to stutter out.

Hannibal drew back a little, swirling his tongue lightly around the hard nub before pressing a kiss to it and moving down. He stopped and looked up at Will through lidded eyes, seeking permission.

Will’s jaw tightened and he gave a quick nod before he could change his mind. Hannibal let out something like a quiet growl before running his tongue along the line of Will’s right pectoral scar. Will drew a sharp breath and flexed his fingers in Hannibal’s hair.

He was trembling again when Hannibal started to move downward - sucking open mouthed kisses into Will’s flesh down his torso and to the scar he had *gifted*. Another kiss had Will tightening his jaw and near sobbing - overwhelmed physically and emotionally.

The noise that escaped Will was more sob than anything as Hannibal’s hands began to work open his trousers, undoing his belt and fly before slipping completely from Will’s hands. Hannibal sat back on his haunches, an expression of determined lust set on his face as he began pulling down Will’s trousers. He got them to Will’s thighs before stopping, looking down at the boxers Will wore, the limp shape within.

Will’s legs were trapped in his trousers as Hannibal leaned in and nuzzled at his packer. Will groaned, painfully hard, his cock being stimulated by the pressure of Hannibal pushing the faux penis down onto him. Will couldn’t help but grind up into Hannibal’s face.

“Please…” He moaned.

He felt the heavy, shaky breath Hannibal let out. A little crack in the man’s exterior betraying that he was as turned on as Will.

“Please Hannibal.” Will urged again.

This time Hannibal gathered himself together. He pulled down Will’s underwear and packer until they met trousers and then continued to pull as Will wriggled out of them. His trousers fell unceremoniously off the end of the bed.

Hannibal started back up the bed, gently spreading Will’s thighs with his hands.

Will was sweating with nervous anticipation when Hannibal’s mouth landed over his cock, sucking him into his mouth and putting his tongue to work once more. Will groaned and spread his legs wider, gripping Hannibal’s hair once more as the man sucked and swirled his tongue.

Will gasped when Hannibal’s pulled off and trailed his tongue lower, hesitating as he pressed a kiss to Will’s front hole.

“Yes,” Will nodded and let out a shaky breath. “I’ll tell you if I need you to stop.”

Hannibal nodded and took the encouragement to lick over Will’s hole before sliding his tongue inside. Will cried out, gripping his fingers and involuntarily pressing his thighs together enough to trap Hannibal between them. Hannibal grunted but doubled his efforts, tonguing Will thoroughly. Will was moaning his enjoyment and arching his back, when Hannibal slid his tongue out and replaced it with two fingers. He worked them slowly in and out - curving them against Will’s g-spot - as he moved his mouth’s attentions back to Will’s cock.

“Oh god…” Will cried out, panting and arching as Hannibal sucked and fucked him.

Words came easier now, his tongue loosened by ecstasy, but still not the ones he wanted or needed. A gentle stream but with a strong undercurrent of unvoiced desires and needs. A shark swam through the depths.

Fuck me, Hannibal. Please. I’ve needed this for so long. Needed you. Needed you to know and love me, love every part of me.

Perhaps he said it aloud, he wasn’t sure, but Hannibal was withdrawing again, moving back up with wet kisses up Will’s body until their mouths pressed together again and Will could taste himself on Hannibal’s tongue.

He felt Hannibal shuffle between his thighs, not breaking the kiss as he pulled his own underwear down enough to free his cock and press it to Will’s - rubbing precum all over him as he frot them together.

“Fuck…” Will groaned, breaking the kiss as his head dropped back.

Need you to fuck me.

“I’m clean.” Will breathed out. “Are you? I’ve had a hysterectomy.”

He could feel Hannibal nodding against him, his head now buried at Will’s neck, kissing along his shoulder as he continued to grind them together.

“Clean.” Hannibal confirmed with another nod.

“Please.” Will groaned and arched against him.

Hannibal’s breath shuddered as he repositioned ever so slightly, lining himself up and pushing slowly into Will, dropping his forehead against Will’s.

As Hannibal slowly moved deeper, time seemed to stop, the stream barely flowing.

Will took a deep breath, his whole body relaxing as he lay back on the bed. He was completely pliant as Hannibal started to move.

It felt so good. He enjoyed this and hadn’t indulged in a long time, other than with toys. He had never dreamed, in what now seemed a distant past, that he would be with Hannibal this way. For him, the most intimate way he possibly could be.

He had imagined so many times being with Hannibal - sucking him off in his office, bending him over his dining table and fucking him with one of his cocks, or even Hannibal taking him in such a way. But never this. He had never allowed himself to think of Hannibal tenderly, worshipfully loving him.

His mouth slackened in bliss as Hannibal rolled his hips, moving wonderfully as his mouth went back to nuzzling - Will’s throat, his clavicle, an occasional nip, lick or suck at a nipple.

Hannibal’s mouth finally settled on Will’s throat, sucking deep kisses into the stubbled skin. The angle resulted in their bodies laying flatter together - Will’s cock already caught between them was now subject to a friction that he knew wouldn’t take long to send him over the edge.

Will cried out at the position change. His hands went around Hannibal, scratching at his back - clawing him closer as his legs hooked around Hannibal’s waist, willing him harder and deeper.

“Oh, fuck… oahh…” Will clutched at Hannibal as he grunted and thrust above him. “I’m-”

Will didn’t get any more words out before his climax rolled over him, his whole body shuddering as his cock throbbed against Hannibal’s groin. Every muscle tightened and Hannibal hissed before he started fucking harder through Will’s spasming inner muscles.

“Will…” Hannibal cried, burying his face in the crook of Will’s neck, his hips stuttering through his own orgasm.

Will gasped and shuddered as he felt Hannibal release inside him, adding to his own wetness.

Hannibal collapsed against him and they clung together, both trying to catch their breath.

“I love you Will.” Hannibal panted. “My beautiful boy.”

Will felt silent tears streak his face, he wondered if they fell into his mouth they would taste like the waters of the stream.

*

It was the gentle hand that woke Will.

Light fingers tracing the scar along his left pectoral. The intimacy of the act made him smile. Being intimate with Hannibal made him smile.

He hummed his pleasure and stretched, shoulder joints cracking as he reached his arms above his head.

Hannibal’s fingers hesitated for a moment, clearly unsure whether to continue now that his subject was awake.

“Do you often touch people whilst they are sleeping? Seems pretty inappropriate for a doctor, Doctor.” Will’s voice was heavy with sleep, his body heavy with a satisfied exhaustion.

He hummed again when Hannibal’s fingers resumed. His eyes open, Will could now see Hannibal’s expression - one of tender awe as he stroked the scars across Will’s chest.

“You didn’t notice…” Will started, “after Muskrat farm, you put me in pyjamas and when I woke I was terrified that you knew, but-”

“I didn’t. It was dark. I didn’t touch your underwear, was more concerned with addressing your injuries and…” Hannibal trailed off, as though he too was unsure how he had missed it. Will could imagine the scene: Hannibal having found pyjamas he never wore, musty and stiff, folded in a bedroom drawer, had dressed him in the dark - savouring every moment and hoping he didn’t wake.

“I’m glad.” Will picked up.

A small smile spread across Hannibal’s lips, his fingers still caressing as he propped himself on his elbows to look at Will.

“That I didn’t notice, or that I now know?”

Will huffed a laugh. “Both I guess. As with most things with you Hannibal, there is only so much regret I can hold onto, given that everything that has happened has brought us to this point.”

“Such a remarkable boy.” Hannibal hummed, leaning in and pressing his lips lightly to the right-hand scar.

Will wanted to give a witty retort, but instead only a moan escaped, as he stretched further - laying himself completely prone for Hannibal.

“This is all I ever wanted,” Hannibal nuzzled the words against his skin as he leaned in to mouth at the stubble along his throat and jaw until he reached Will’s mouth.

Will accepted the kiss, the tenderness of it.

“Stay with me.” Hannibal breathed the words against his lips.

Will’s breath hitched and he nodded, remembering Hannibal’s nightmares of the night before, and how deeply he felt them himself.

Where else would I go?

The words rattled around his head before he discounted them. Inside him the waters were calm, the anxious storms since the fall broke - the words flowing freely in the water but no longer needing to be said.

He didn’t know how long they would stay in this place, long enough for Will to finally step into the water and find peace with it again. Long enough that if and when they moved on, the intimate and loving domesticity they had already fallen into would go with them.

Till death do us part…

“I’m here Hannibal, I’m not going anywhere.”

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